

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SS-20 SSO-00 ISO-00 INRE-00 /033 R

DRAFTED BY INR:RCALDWELL:MPACKMAN:EW

APPROVED BY INR:MPACKMAN

INR:WGHYLAND

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 214840

TOSEC 75

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO, US

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN PORTUGAL

1. FOLLOWING IS INITIAL INR ASSESSMENT OF PORTUGUESE SITUATION, ON WHICH FULL INFORMATION IS STILL NOT AVAILABLE.

2. THE WEEKEND'S EVENTS--SPINOLA'S BEING FORCED TO CANCEL THE RALLY OF HIS SYMPATHIZERS ON SATURDAY, HIS RESIGNATION THIS MORNING, AND HIS SUCCESSION AS PRESIDENT BY ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF COSTA GOMES--CONFIRM THAT THE REAL POWER IN PORTUGAL IS HELD BY THE "LEFTIST" ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT AND PRIME MINISTER BRIGADIER GENERAL GONCALVES AND SUGGEST THAT THE "RIGHTISTS" HAVE SUFFERED A BLOW FROM WHICH THEY MAY BE UNABLE TO RECOVER.

3. SPINOLA, WHO INCREASINGLY HAS BEEN ONLY A FIGUREHEAD IN RECENT MONTHS, HAS FAILED IN HIS SECOND ATTEMPT AT A SHOWDOWN WITH THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT(MFA).IN JULY HE ;AD ATTEMPTED TO HAVE THE DATE FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS MOVED UP AND TO HAVE HIS OWN MAN, DEFENSE MINISTER
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LT. COL. MIGUEL, NAMED AS PRIME MINISTER. HIS POWER PLAY WAS SUPPORTED BY THE CENTRISTS BUT OPPOSED BY THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, THE SOCIALISTS, AND THE COMMUNISTS.

4. EARLIER THIS MONTH THE PENDULUM SEEMED TO HAVE SWUNG

BACK TO SPINOLA, IN PART BECAUSE COSTA GOMES BACKED HIM. AT THE SAME TIME COSTA GOMES APPARENTLY KEPT HIS LINES OPEN BOTH TO THE MORE "TRADITIONALIST" ELEMENTS IN THE ARMED FORCES AND TO THE "LEFTISTS" IN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, AFTER THE "LEFTISTS" HAD PRESSURED SPINOLA TO CALL OFF SATURDAY'S RALLY TO AVOID BLOODSHED, COSTA GOMES APPARENTLY SHIFTED HIS ALLEGIANCE TO GONCALVES.

5. SPINOLA APPARENTLY FAILED TO REALIZE THAT THE MILITARY IS NOT GOING TO RALLY TO THE SUPPORT OF ANY CAUSE LABELED AS "FASCIST" IN TODAY'S PORTUGAL.

6. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER COSTA GOMES WILL BE HIS OWN MAN AS PRESIDENT OR WHETHER HE WILL SIMPLY CARRY OUT THE MFA'S BIDDING. THE OUTCOME OF THE CRISIS HAS CLEARLY STRENGTHENED THE MFA, AND IT APPEARS THAT COSTA GOMES WILL BE EFFECTIVE ONLY AS LONG AS HE PLAYS BY THE RULES ESTABLISHED BY THE MFA.

7. AS A RESULT OF THE WEEKEND CRISIS, THE PORTUGUESE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS CLEARLY MOVED TO THE LEFT; HOWEVER, WE STILL DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT MFA "LEFTIST" LEADERS SUCH AS GONCALVES TO KNOW HOW FAR TO THE LEFT. THE COMMUNISTS WERE CLEARLY THE BEST-ORGANIZED AND MOST EFFECTIVE CIVILIAN FORCE DURING THE CRISIS, AND THERE ARE RUMORS THAT COMMUNIST TIES TO THE MFA HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED. AT THE SAME TIME, OFFICES OF RIGHT-WING POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED, AND "RIGHTIST" MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA HAVE BEEN SACKED.

8. OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF THE LIKELY FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS OF A GONCALVES-DOMINATED REGIME IS THAT:
(A)--DECOLONIZATION WILL CONTINUE AT ITS CURRENT RATE.
SPINOLA'S PROTESTATIONS OVER THE SPEED OF THE PROCESS
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ARE NOW A DEAD ISSUE.

(B)--THE PROBABILITY OF A MOVE TOWARD NON-ALIGNMENT HAS BEEN INCREASED. ALTHOUGH NO MEMBERS OF THE GONCALVES FACTION HAVE MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THIS EFFECT, THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT SOME MEMBERS FAVOR A NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY.

(C)--THE IMPACT ON THE AZORES NEGOTIATIONS IS UNCERTAIN, BUT THEY MAY BE DELAYED UNTIL AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE THEM UP.

9. IN SUM, WE ARE WITNESSING THE UNPRECEDENTED PHENOMENA

OF LEFTIST-ORIENTED MILITARY IN A WESTERN NATO COUNTRY--
A PHENOMENA ABOUT WHICH WE CAN ONLY GUESS AS TO ITS
ULTIMATE DEVELOPMENT. INCREASINGLY, PORTUGAL TAKES ON
THE CHARACTER OF POPULAR FRONT GOVERNMENT, WITH STRONG
ARMED POWER TO SUPPORT IT. WE CANNOT EXCLUDE A RIGHTIST
COUNTER REVOLUTION, POSSIBLY SPONSORED BY A GOVERNMENT-IN-
EXILE UNDER SPINOLA OR OTHERS, BUT THE IMMEDIATE OUTLOOK
DEPENDS GREATLY ON THE PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER OF
COSTA GOMES, AND WHETHER HE CAN CHECK THE LEFTIST TREND;
HIS PERFORMANCE IN RECENT DAYS SUGGESTS THAT HE WILL NOT
ASSUME THAT ROLE. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 18 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC 75, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE214840
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D740275-0662
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974092/aaaaabhs.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SITUATION IN PORTUGAL
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO, US, (SPINOLA, ANTONIO), (GONCALVES, VASCO), (COSTA GOMEZ)
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005